CHAPTER IV

MAJOR ACTIVITIES, ACHIEVEMENTS AND SUCCESS STORIES OF NSS

This chapter deals with major activities, significant achievements and replicable success stories of National Service Scheme in Kerala, which evolved from the status of just a Scheme to a movement due to its massive community involvement, social outreach and innovative programmes, at different levels and multiple fields. This fundamental change in the nature of NSS can be attributed to the Kerala model of development\(^1\) in the realm of voluntary service. Achievements such as low infant mortality and population growth, and high literacy and life expectancy, along with factors responsible for such achievements are elements constituting the Kerala model.

The socio-cultural background in Kerala conducive for commendable growth of NSS was due to its long cherished belief that voluntary service to the humanity is considered equal to worship of God (\textit{Manava Seva Madhava Seva})\(^2\). The motto of NSS "Not Me But You\(^3\)" reflects the essence of democratic life and uphold self-less service. NSS helps students develop tolerable attitude to differing points of view\(^4\) and to be considerate to others. The philosophy of the NSS doctrine in this motto underlines the belief that welfare of an individual is ultimately dependent on the welfare of the society. Therefore, the NSS volunteers shall strive for the well-being of the society. As an extension component of higher education\(^5\), NSS volunteer service activities
to the community are a learning experience and exposure, unattainable either in classroom or in laboratory of the educational institutions.

The main objectives of National Service Scheme are:

1. To understand the community they work in
2. Self-realization in relation to community
3. Identify the needs and problems of the community and involve in problem solving
4. Develop social and civic responsibility
5. Utilize knowledge in finding practical solutions to individual and community problems
6. Develop competence required for group living and sharing responsibilities.
7. Gain skills in mobilizing community participation
8. Acquire leadership qualities and democratic attitudes
9. Develop capacity to meet emergencies and natural disasters and
10. Practice national integration and social harmony

Realizing above objectives, NSS envisioned moulding a set model students who can make creative ripples in the campus and the community. Such students could address global and national problems in the grass root level involving in service activities. As an academic expansion, NSS inculcates voluntary service in the minds of the students and teachers through community interactions. It brings academic institutions and community together for desired
sustainable development through social service. Inculcating skill and knowledge, it helps develop dignity of labour and self-help for intellectual and physical improvement of the students. It can also be considered a social mechanism of the campus to channelize vibrant youth energy to constructive and creative fields. Thus, it could be stated that the NSS activities indirectly promote campus discipline. As NSS is an apolitical organisation, its leaders are acceptable to all sections of students. Similarly, NSS programme officers are known for their active involvement in service activities in campus and the community. As the NSS has been enrolling volunteers from all classes of an educational institution, irrespective of the subject of study, a prudent and dynamic NSS programme officer commands respect from the students studying in different disciplines, which support campus discipline.

NSS regularly conducts orientation programmes on health awareness, career, life skills, group discussion, mind storming and similar programmes on political, economic and cultural issues. They aim the enrichment of the personality of NSS volunteers. Thus one can assume that NSS programmes not only develop the personality of NSS volunteers but also influence non NSS students producing a cumulative effect of value addition in education ultimately contributing national development.

In 1970-80’s, one of the main NSS activity throughout Kerala was distillation of rural ponds and cleaning village canals promoting availability of clean water for domestic and irrigation purposes. Water Literacy Programme
“Neermary and Neerthadam” with the support of Block Panchayaths and soil conservation department, is still continuing in certain units. The NSS campaign for a plastic-waste free campus succeeded in many educational institutions.

HIV/AIDS Awareness Programmes have been conducted by the NSS units of Kerala. The NSS has been organising programmes against Drug and Alcohol abuse throughout Kerala, organising anti-Drug campus clubs. The NSS units of EMEA College, Kondotty and MES College of Mampad, Malappuram organised and popularised pain and palliative care programmes. The NSS organised energy saving training programmes in Vocational Higher Secondary Schools in Kerala with the support of Energy Management Cell, Kerala State Electricity Board.

One of the regular NSS programmes is blood grouping camp, sensitization, and awareness on voluntary donation of blood. The NSS initiated voluntary blood donation as a part of its programme, long before Kerala State AIDS Control Society undertook the blood donation campaign.

**Major Activities**

The major NSS activities may be classified into two (1) regular activities in the campus and adopted villages/slums and (2) special camping programme of 10/7 days. The NSS volunteers have to serve in their educational institutions/villages/slums to complete the mandatory regular service of 120 hours each in two years for a total of 240 hours. As per the fundamental principles of
National Service Scheme, a volunteer is expected to remain in constant touch with the community. Hence, it is important that a particular village/slum is selected for implementation of NSS programmes. As the NSS volunteer should live with the community and learn from their experience, the village/slum should be carefully selected for adoption by NSS units. This practice has been given utmost care for the last 44 years of its tradition. The campus-community interaction may be considered a novel experience to the volunteers that have a component of value addition in their higher education. It appears that this value addition of NSS is considered by the University Grants Commission in the event of accrediting institutions of higher learning for evaluation.\textsuperscript{13}

Special Camping forms an integral part of NSS. It has special appeal to the youth as it provides unique opportunities to the students for group living, collective experience and interaction with community. Special campings are organised generally on various developmental issues of national importance. In the past, the themes of the Special Camping Programmes have been ‘Youth Against Famine’, ‘Youth Against Dirt and Disease’, ‘Youth for Rural Reconstruction’, ‘Youth for Eco-Development’ and ‘Youth for Mass Literacy’, ‘Youth for National Integration and Social Harmony’. The current theme of Special Camping is ‘Youth for Sustainable Development with special focus on Watershed Management and Wasteland Development’. Every year 50 per cent of the volunteers of each NSS unit are expected to participate in special camps. As per the NSS manual 2006,\textsuperscript{14} the primary objectives of the special camping programmes are:
- Making education more relevant in present situation to meet the felt needs of the communities and supplement the education of university/college/school students by bringing them face to face with the community.

- To provide opportunities to students to play their due roles in the implementation of various development programmes by planning and executing development projects, which not only help in creating durable community assets in rural areas and slums but also result in improvement of the condition of weaker sections of the communities.

- Encouraging youth to work with adults in rural areas, thereby developing their character, social commitment, discipline and helpful attitudes towards community;

- Building potential youth leaders exploring latent potentialities of the campers, both students as well as local youth (rural and urban), with a view to involve them more intimately in development projects for longer periods. The local leadership generated during the camps would also be useful in ensuring proper maintenance of assets created as a result of the camps and Emphasizing dignity of labour, self-help and the need for combining physical work with intellectual pursuits.

NSS activities uphold Gandhian self-help and dignity of labour, indispensable for national development. Exposing manual labour as dignified is an added advantage of the NSS. It inculcates a valuable message to the youth, not just preaching but by practicing it as part of NSS activities.
The activities undertaken by NSS over the years are of two types: earlier activities and on-going activities. The characteristic feature of earlier activities is that it was discontinued not because it is irrelevant or outdated, but other agencies assumed the role of NSS. Similarly, the differences in the objectives of the NSS and later agencies are distinguishable. It could be that NSS took it as part of self-imposed voluntary community service and a medium for engaging students in ground social realities keeping view of the activity as a learning experience directly from field, whereas the new agencies undertook it, as part of official duty or for commercial purposes. The second categories of NSS activity are the on-going activities. This nomenclature is due to its socio-economic relevance in the current context.

**Earlier Activities**

The following are some major programmes NSS discontinued in the wake of progressive development. The rural road construction, minor irrigation work and adult and non-formal education were brought under the control of Panchyathi Raj institutions empowered for local infrastructure development including education, by the (73 and 74 Article) Constitutional amendment. The Pulse polio vaccination campaign and similar programmes either were discontinued or became nominal in the wake of the electronic mass media coverage in mass awareness Programmes.

Repairing of rural roads was one of the major NSS activities till devolution of powers to the *Panchayathi Raj* institutions as said in Article 73
and 74 of Indian Constitutional Amendment in 1994. Roads are the basic infrastructure needed for modern development, which was inadequate in the rural areas of Kerala. Paucity of funds, dispute over the route and obstruction of road construction, on flimsy reasons by political parties were usual stumbling blocks in construction of new roads in rural areas. The intervention of NSS programme officers along with the student volunteer leaders cleared the way and subsequently socio-political organisations interestingly participated in *sramadan* (voluntary service) of road construction. Thus was the role of NSS as a local arbitrator for local development. As NSS had no political affiliation, it linked different segments of the society. Providing ethnic food to hundreds of NSS volunteers during the ten-day special camps by local people has been a usual practice. This gesture from the indigenous population shows that NSS has been addressing the felt needs of the community. Many of the roads initially laid by NSS were later taken up by the Panchyath and developed into tarred roads. Thus, many rural paths of Kerala initially undertook as part of NSS voluntary social service were subsequently upgraded and developed by the Government departments. This is unique distinction of the rural roads called NSS roads. It creates ownership and emotional attachment of the people with the road as well as the NSS fraternity. Thus, NSS built an identity of participation in rural development with wholehearted cooperation of the beneficiaries. This exemplifies extending higher education from the campus to the community by building India from below.
Another significant social intervention of the NSS fraternity was sensitization of rural people on vaccination. It was an important NSS activity with the support of the Government Primary Health Centres. The volunteers visited houses in villages, as part of NSS special camp activities to generate awareness on the need and importance of vaccination. In a way, they were missionaries of the concept called health is wealth\textsuperscript{20}. As the Health Department had limited health workers, medical officers in charge of vaccination duty always supported the NSS volunteers. Now-a-days people in rural areas are aware of the need for vaccination, thanks to the audio-video service of the television channels, All India Radio and private radios. Thus until expansion of electronic media, NSS has been notably propagating the message of timely vaccination as precautionary measure of health. This can be considered a genuine social service for developing a healthy society.

Construction of check dams for helping the farmers in irrigation purpose is yet another important voluntary work NSS used to undertake in the villages. Scores of check dams have been built by the NSS volunteers across streams and rivers of Kerala. Apart from this, a state level camp of NSS volunteers has spread the importance of water recharging in the hillocks. It was attended by environmental luminaries of Kerala like Sugathakumari, T. Sobhindran (National Vriksha Mitra awardee), Achuthan, a well-known environmentalist, and the renowned historian M.G.S. Narayanan and popular short story writer P. Valsala. The camp was a joint venture of NSS and Sathya Darsana Shylam, an active non-governmental organisation of Calicut. The involvement of the
NSS in the water recharging projects of the rural areas is a testimony of its commitment for the pursuit of agriculture and environment both considered essential components for development.

Educational empowerment of the marginalised sections of villages as well as towns, was always an integral part of the NSS activity. Literacy activity was the mainstream social activity of the NSS till the declaration of Kerala as the first literate state in India in April 18, 1991. Literacy and awareness on responsible citizenship programmes were other significant areas of NSS social service from its inception in 1969 up to the mid1990s. Even before the launch of NSS in Kerala, adult and non-formal education was conducted by different voluntary groups. The Grandha sala sanghom (Library Movement) initiated by P.N. Panicker and his associates were already operating in Kerala. The Government of India direction in 1978, for the promotion of literacy called Mass Programme for Functional Literacy accelerated the process. The NSS was actively present in the field, during the Hundred Per Cent Literacy Campaign in Kottayam municipal town and in Ernakulam district. The commendable role of NSS in both campaigns, was duly recognized honouring the NSS unit of Mahatma Gandhi University by the first Indira Gandhi National NSS Award in 1996. Subsequently, in 1998 the Kerala Government formed Kerala State Literacy Mission Authority for conducting adult and non-formal education, reducing the role of NSS functionaries and volunteers in the Literacy Movement. In these circumstances, it is to be noted that the contribution of NSS
for the promotion of literacy and adult education is substantiated in this study as a success story of NSS contribution in Kerala.

Another important activity of NSS related with health is the programme of polio immunisation started in the early 1970s. The NSS volunteers, during the ten-day special camping programme, used to form squads to visit houses in the premises of the camping area and circulated notices and communicated the message of precautionary measures to the local people. It was a house-to-house campaign. It deserves special mention that long before the World Bank Pulse polio Immunisation Campaign launched, the NSS actively engaged in polio immunisation programme. In this case, one may conclude that the NSS is a trendsetter of national development at grassroot level. The onset of electronic mass media and its ever-increasing coverage, made the door-to-door sensitisation campaign of NSS against polio, irrelevant and unnecessary. Moreover, the availability of medicine (Pulse polio drops) even in the public places like bus stands and railway stations resulted in the discontinuation of Pulse polio campaign by the NSS. From the cited major programmes NSS discontinued it can be concluded that, the NSS always rose to the occasion and actively involved in sorting out people’s needs. The NSS pioneered many National Development Activities in the grass root level. The change in the system and technology led NSS to change focus of activity. The study explores the relevance, validation and justification for continuation/discontinuation of NSS activities observing global scenario and the local reality.
The on-going NSS activities may be classified into two: The first category of activities is those that began with inception and still actively conducted by most of the NSS units. The NSS Advisory Committee of the concerned Universities and Educational Directorates have been recommending such activities as being capable of substantially contributing personality development of the NSS volunteers and the quality enrichment of the community. In a way, both are essential components for national development. The second category of the on-going NSS activities are such those which have been either implemented as per the direction from the Ministry of Youth Affairs, Government of India or initiative of the respective NSS units, which are relevant to the area as immediate needs of the community. Such projects are chosen based on the need analysis of the NSS volunteers, a catalyst for the national building. The on-going NSS activities can further be classified into major on-going activities and minor on-going activities.

The major on-going activities are activities conducted considering its current relevance and utility to satisfy the targeted task of attaining the objectives of NSS. It is very important to note that all such activities are either tangible or observable and to a large extent verifiable. The activities generally ensured major socio-economic dividend to the student volunteers as well as the community. They come under the category of time tested and proven educational value as a potential extension of higher education. The expected outcome from such activities is moulding better citizen inculcating virtues of
tolerance, discipline, patriotism, compassion, sensitivity and capability to imbibe national development using youth potential.

Blood donation, National Integration Programme, Observation of important days, sensitisation and awareness programmes, environmental preservation, sanitation and health education including AIDS awareness Programmes, socio-economic survey, nature camps with the support of forest department, personality development programmes, NSS orientation programme for newly enrolled volunteers, sex education programme and practicing patriotic songs are the important major on-going activities currently conducted in Kerala.

Blood is a vital component of human body. As per the National Service Scheme unit of the National Institute of Technology, Calicut, 2011 only 39 percent of the general population is eligible to donate, but fewer than 5 percent of those eligible actually donate\(^{26}\). Keeping this in mind NSS volunteers enrolled themselves as potential blood donors and donated blood when required by the community. It is customary for the NSS to organise blood grouping camps to popularise blood donation culture. Normally camps are conducted with the support of Health department. A large number of students from the campus and people from the community identify their blood group. Subsequently a register of potential blood donors are prepared by entering their contact numbers and postal address. It is kept in the NSS office for ready
reference in emergencies. It is a clear testimony for the national service tradition of NSS through community service.

Though NSS launched blood grouping programme in the beginning itself, it became popular only in the mid-1970s. Now it is a main NSS activity in Kerala. Most of the NSS units conduct blood grouping camps, donates blood and create awareness on the blood donation as life donation. The NSS units of S.N. College Chempazhanthy, Thiruvananthapuram, ranked first in Kerala, in four consecutive years, from 2002 to 2005 for which it was awarded. Similarly, most of the NSS units in higher education institutes donate blood to the needy at emergencies. This gesture of NSS cements social relationship between campus and community.

The World Health Organization has declared blood as a vital lifesaving substance. By saving precious life, one can spread communal harmony. It is here that the role of NSS in blood donation became very significant. Blood donation inculcates the attitude of compassion and fellow feeling in the minds of donor and the receiver. The role of programme officers, helped to a large extent remove many misconceptions about blood donation, lying dominant in the minds of students as well as the local community. In many higher education institutions, Blood Donors Forums are functioning to cater the increasing demand of the life saving fluid.

It is a clear testimony of the national service of NSS. This unique tradition of the scheme promotes emotional integration of the community,
which results in social unity and communal harmony, the declared objectives of
NSS.

India is a country of diverse linguistic, ethnic and religious groups, each
having its own rich cultural heritage. Although this apparent diversity has an
innate unity, the inherent process of natural and social selection manifest itself
in a variety of potentially explosive interpersonal tension in society. It is often
reflected in the campus life of higher education institutions. The major thrust of
the present proposal is to make campus youth experience the existence of
diversity to appreciate and understand the need for fostering tolerance and
respect for this diversity. In other words, NSS facilitates celebrations of the
diversity of the campus.

National integration is the awareness of a common identity amongst the
citizens of a country. It means that though we belong to different castes,
religions and regions and speak different languages we recognize the fact that
we are all citizens of one country. Integration is very important in the building
of a strong and prosperous nation.

Unity in our country does not mean the kind of oneness that comes from
racial and cultural similarity. It is unity in spite of great differences, in other
words, unity in diversity. An important historical event in which this unity was
displayed was the freedom movement when all the Indians united against the
British rule.
Even after independence, the situation in some parts of India become explosive owing to divisive forces like communalism, regionalism, casteism etc., which posed a serious threat to the unity and integrity of the country (eg:- in Kashmir, Assam and Punjab). Therefore, it has become a matter of great concern for the country and the youth. The youth is worried to see the country’s unity and integrity in jeopardy. The condition of the whole country and particularly Kashmir, Punjab and North Eastern States, was very critical. Many factors work behind national problems. For example unscientific and artificial demarcation of boundaries between India and Pakistan and India and China, uneven development in the country after independence, excessive centralization of power, different regional languages, separation of cultural identity and narrow minded conflicts between party political interests, foreign intervention and non-enforcement of treaties between concerned states, unemployment and cultural development and job oriented education for the youth etc. are closely linked with these problems. All these factors have become very acute. Corruption in bureaucracy, black money, inequality and lack of moral value has shaken the faith of the people, especially the youth in state machinery. In such circumstances, the role of the student youth of India enrolled in centers of higher education is a national problem which deserves a rational treatment for its solution.

In these circumstances, national integration remains a crucial issue in India, notwithstanding that we boast of a civilization nearly 5000 years old. True, some of the divisive factors may be inherent in Indian history, geography
and culture; but there are also forces, which accentuate these factors. Religious fundamentalism is one while linguistic diversities constitute another. There are people holding an exclusive view of religion, which drives them into a sectarian frenzy intolerant to other faiths. Despite a shared culture, linguistic diversities have often generated conflicts among different communities threatening national unity. The same holds for regionalism, no doubt due to inequitable development among different regions of India. The caste system has also contributed to weakening unity among different sections of the community. All the above factors pose a serious challenge to India’s unity and integrity. Therefore, conscious efforts must be made to preserve the same. The youth of the country, in particular, will have to be put in the vanguard of such effort. The scheme of national integration, by Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, under the banner of NSS is one such small but significant step in this direction.

The scheme of promotion of national integration, seeks to provide the youth from different parts of the country from diverse religions and cultural backgrounds, a common platform to interact with each other, know each other’s customs and life styles, to work together in community welfare projects making them aware of the underlying unity. By living together in an NSS camp (special camp or National Integration camp) albeit for a limited duration, the youth would develop better understanding of different perceptions, beliefs, faiths and life styles, which in turn strengthen a secular and tolerant outlook.
The following are the programmes and activities covered under the promotion of National Integration.

- National Integration camps.
- Inter State Youth Exchange Programme (ISYEP)
- Organization of symposia and seminars on issues relevant to national integration.
- Organization of multi-cultural activities on the theme of national integration;
- Undertaking of research and publication on issues relevant to national integration.
- Undertaking of community service by youth, drawn from different regions, background and faiths.
- Organization of leadership training camps for youth, hailing from different regions, backgrounds and faiths,
- National youth Festival;
- National Youth Award;
- Other activities and programmes which foster communal harmony and national unity.
The NSS of Kerala conducted five national integration camps hosting 1500 students from different states of India.

2. Central Polytechnic College Vatiyoorkavu, Thiruvananthampuam, 2000  
3. Bishop Moore College, Mavelikkara, University of Kerala, 2001  

Apart from this, National Youth Festival 2003 was hosted in Thiruvananthapuram by Nehru Yuvak Kendra, Ministry of Youth Affairs and Sports, Government of India, with the support of Youth Affairs Department, Government of Kerala. The objective of this national event was appreciation of Indian cultural diversity to promote national emotional integration of NSS volunteers and the members of Nehru Yuvak Kendra. During the camps, NSS volunteers, Programme Officers as well as Programme Coordinators participate in many events promoting national integration. Apart from the cited camps, a mega camp was organised at Nalpathimala, adjacent to the headquarters of Mahathma Gandhi University, Kottayam on 10-19 January 1991.

The NSS of Kerala regularly observed important days, eg: National integration day, NSS day, National Blood Donation day, Gandhi Jayanthi celebration, National Youth Day in the memory of the birth anniversary of Swami Vivekananda, Republic day, Independence Day, and Hiroshima day to
remind the ruins of atom bomb. Similarly, such important days are observed to make awareness in the young minds of NSS volunteers about the success and failures of humanity in the march of civilization. Another significant activity of NSS is promoting a work culture, earn-while-you-learn programme encouraging earning by the students during their leisure time. The Vocational Higher Secondary Education unit of NSS organised a unique get-together in November 18, 2004. It was a meeting of NSS volunteers, who were driving autorikshas in their leisure time, in Ernakulum town. It was an attempt by the NSS to promote self-sufficiency and sustainability even during the student days. They were sensitized that, it was a replicable best practice of the developed countries in Europe and America. Here the message NSS tried to disseminate was that earning while learning is a good habit for students of a developing country.

The NSS has always been in the forefront in the actively involving the student youth to conserve the environment for enabling a sustainable development. It has been a forerunner imbibing an eco-friendly lifestyle channelizing the youth energy from an environmental perspective. The concern of the NSS for environmental protection is very much evident from the national themes adopted from 1974 to 2006, as part of ten-day mandatory special camps.
The following are the themes:

- 1970- Youth against dirt and disease

- 1974-1975- Youth for afforestation

- 1975-1977- Youth for afforestation and tree plantation

- 1978-1982- Youth for eco-development

- 1983-1987 “Youth for Rural Reconstruction”

- 1988-1989 “Youth for Development”


- 1995-1998 “Youth for Sustainable Development

- 1999-2001 “Youth for Healthy Society”

- 2001-2002 “Youth for Haryali” (Greenery)

- 2002-2003 “Youth for Jal Samvardhani” (Water Conservation)

- 2003-2004 “Youth for Swatchatha (Comprehensive and Integrated Cleanliness)

- 2004-2005 “Nadiyon Mein Phirse Bahe Jal Dhara Yahi hai Sankalp Hamara” (River Protection)

- 2006-2008 “Healthy Youth for Healthy India”
Most of the cited themes closely linked with environment conservation were popularised and organised through NSS units of Kerala. The NSS as a government supported voluntary scheme has intervened in conservation of nature. In this context the Government of India created a National Eco-development Board, in 1981. The task of the Board was to identify critical ecosystems, prepare detailed project profiles, and implement identified projects. The significant aspect of the work is to mobilize public opinion involving students in higher education institutions, academicians and voluntary organisations, environmentalists and social workers. In this circumstance, Farook College, Kozhikode implemented a medicinal garden project with the collaboration of OISCA International. The commitment and concern of the NSS is referred by M. S. Swaminathan in 1981 in his keynote address, in the Indian Science Congress at Varanasi.\textsuperscript{35} He called upon country’s youth to mobilize themselves, improve and enrich through the National Service Scheme.

Starting its maiden campaign, “Youth against Famine, in 1969-70, with 40,000 volunteers in the national level, NSS conducted various training programmes on the theme of the environment. These included propagation of kitchen gardens, deepening of wells, cleaning of tanks and canals, providing succour to the impoverished people. During the year 1970-72 NSS focused on the theme “Youth against dirt and disease”, in which, over 100 study camps were held all over Kerala, creating awareness on health, hygiene and cleanliness. In these types of service, NSS has been deeply drinking from the Gandhian dictum “Cleanliness is next to Godliness”. During this period, NSS
volunteers made massive efforts to provide pure drinking water, remove garbage and promote immunisation.

From the year 1974-75 NSS focused on “Youth for Afforestation”, which resulted in making thousands of youth aware of the importance of tree plantations. Acres of wastelands were developed under social forestry, in collaboration with the forest department. Further, NSS launched campaigns on the theme, “Youth for eco-development”, “Youth for Environment”, “Youth for Rural-reconstruction” and “Youth for development”.

At the national level, over the past 44 years, NSS has developed gardens in deserts, turning barren lands into green fields. Thousands of village houses were made free from smoke with smokeless ‘chulas’, solar cookers and ‘gobar’ gas plants. Sensitising on environmental issues, ‘Van Mahotsav’, World Environment day, and Afforestation day were celebrated in festive mood influencing the people’s consciousness towards protection and conservation of environment.

The Save Suklina Lake campaign in Chandigarh, Clean Hussain Sagar Lake campaign in Hyderabad, integrated wasteland development project in Mhow block of Madhya Pradesh, Western Ghats development Project at Sirsi in Karnataka, Massive Afforestation at Thirumala hills in Andhra Pradesh, Cashew plantations in Orissa, Avenue Plantations with 3,50,000 saplings in Haryana, construction of check dams at Alwar in Rajasthan are a few NSS achievements.36
The enchanting topography of Kerala is widely acclaimed. Despite its natural beauty and pleasant climate, the environment conservation is neglected. Some significant remedial measures were undertaken by the NSS volunteers, for environment conservation. The policy of promotion of national development by the NSS has also contributed in natural environment conservation in Kerala. The following are some of the glaring examples of NSS involvement in the field. As early as 1982, the NSS units of Government College, Chittur, Palakkad developed a teak plantation, with the cooperation of the Forest Department. A state level camp was conducted by the state level NSS cell, with the collaboration of Sathya Darsana Sailom, a local environment conservation agency, headed by Prof. Shobindran, the ‘Vriksha Mitra Awardee’ of the Government of India, in December 2003, at Ponkunnu in Kozhikode district. The main objective of the camp was spreading the message of water conservation and sustainable development. As part of the ten day special camp of 100 volunteers, a check dam for preservation of rain water, 18 metres long and three metres wide was constructed at the hillock ‘Ponkunnu’, in Kozhikode district.

The NSS units of SAS College, Areakode, Malappuram district, as part of its ten-day special camp, conducted an exhaustive survey and published a book on the river Chaliyar, namely Chaliyar Rekhakal in 2004. Water check dams were constructed in the Kalpati river, in Palakkad district, obstructing water with hundreds of sand bags and mud, by the NSS units of the Government Polytechnic college, Palakkad in 2005. The NSS unit of
Chemmanad Higher Secondary School published a souvenir, as part of its ten day special camp, in 2002, named *Mukkuti*. It portrays rare medicinal plants and mangroves of the region.

A documentary film on the theme of water conservation, called ‘Nirmaya Karmanasree’\(^{38}\), has produced by the NSS units of Zamorin’s Guruvayurappan College, Kozhikode, under the leadership of programme officer Prof. Shobhindran in 2001. The event constructed a series of check dams in the Noolpuzha Grama Panchayath of Wayanad district.

The article of the researcher published by Chaliyar Protection Council, Vazhakkad (Malappuram) titled ‘Rivers and Cultures’ (2008), is an attempt to project importance of rivers for the healthy survival of the humanity. The researcher’s own experience and exposure in the NSS on the theme of environmental conservation, has a cumulative effect on it.

The Government Ayurveda College, Pariyaram\(^{39}\), affiliated to Kannur University conducted an exhibition of Ayurvedic medicinal plants, as part of its ten day NSS special camp visited by thousands of villagers in 2005-06. It had a strong impact on students, teachers and the community. In 1970-80’s, one of the mainstream NSS activity throughout Kerala was, distilling rural ponds for promoting availability of clean water.

NSS collaborated with Kerala State Legal Services Authority, for conducting legal literacy programmes, for the second year under graduate girl
students. Similarly, NSS *Rail Swatchatha* programme - clean stations and clean trains, in the Railway stations of Kerala under Thiruvananthapuram division 2004. In 2005, the Family Planning Association of India and the NSS Directorate of the Vocational Higher Secondary Education organised joint programme on leadership training for youth on life skills and adolescent health, a novel programme well received in campuses.

Another innovative programme was the collaboration of NSS with Kerala Institute of Local Administration (KILA) for conducting a survey on assets transferred to Panchayat Raj Institutions by the Government of Kerala, from other departments, in the wake of the devolution of powers by the Panchayat Raj act. 73-74. Apart from this, NSS units used to conduct scores of socio-economic surveys, for different developmental projects in their respective educational institutions. The NSS-KILA Survey has been recognised by the Ministry of Panchayat Raj, Government of India, as a replicable initiative for other states. NSS developed OISCA GARDEN- as part of the silver jubilee celebration of the University of Calicut. A garden was developed in the University of Calicut with the support of Japan based environmental organisation namely, the Organisation of Industrial Scientific and Cultural Advancement (OISCA).

Similarly, NSS have been implementing many health awareness programmes, with the support of the Department of Health against dengue fever, rat fever, life style diseases and variety of programmes related with the
problems of health including immunisation, vaccination, healthy practices and culinary habits.

The type of activities that come under Important Minor On-going activities are activities implemented not in all NSS units. Many of them are confined to certain colleges or schools. Here it is to be noted that this category of activities are not less important as far as its socio-economic relevance, but are adding value to the existing education system. It has contributed much for the local development as a novel learning experience to the volunteers. Analyzing such activities, it is well established that they clearly promote national development through local development, utilizing the energy of NSS volunteers.

Cleanliness through Homes (Suchithwam Veedukalilude) is one important ongoing activities of NSS in Kerala. In the present day society dominated by consumer culture, waste control and management are mandatory for evolving a healthy environment. This massive environment awareness programme includes air, water and soil pollution, hygiene, garbage, water conservation, greenbelt development and vector control.

There are three stages in the implementation of this programme. Trainers Training Programme, District level training for NSS volunteers and fieldwork of NSS volunteers. 964 NSS volunteers were given training in this regard. It is a project sponsored by the Kerala State Pollution Control Board.43
Global warming has become a challenge for the very existence of humanity. Deforestation for the purpose of industrial expansion, dam construction etc, has posed a major threat for our ecosystem and it caused soil erosion and global warming. Planting of trees is an effective solution to this problem. Supported by the Department of Social Forestry, NSS has taken initiative to plant 5 lakhs saplings in the campus, on road sides, public places and in houses. It deserves special mention here that 80 percent of them still survive. This project managed to inculcate the feeling of love for trees among students, which can be considered as an asset creation for the country.  

Bhoomitra Sena Club take up environmental protection activities and awareness extension at the grass root level, especially in the vicinity of the campus. Environmental protection activities encourage them to approach environment to address the environmental issues. Understanding and sensitizing the society on the environmental concerns of the local area is also one of its objectives. Every district has eight clubs each and Environment Management Agency, Kerala, support every unit with a financial assistance of ₹15,000/-.

Organic food is the major indicator of a health conscious society. The project aims promoting organic farming and food security. The project brought new and unique experience to the volunteers. The objectives of the project are development of the ‘self reliance’ in agricultural sector, awareness of nature and practice of organic farming and promotion of food security. The major activities that come under this project are organic farming, paddy cultivation,
medicinal garden, vegetable garden, vermin compost plant construction, seminars, discussion, recasting of traditional rituals and festivals, filming and documentary, interaction with aged local agricultural people etc. Vegetable garden is a project, which envisages self-reliance in vegetable production. In this programme, a vegetable garden is cultivated in school premises with the help of agricultural department, agricultural university and the local self-government institution.

The area of paddy cultivation is shrinking day by day in our state. This will adversely affect food security. Realizing this problem, NSS undertook paddy cultivation projects in many units with the cooperation of Local Self-Government Department (LSG) and Agriculture Department.45

“Water is the elixir of life, don’t waste water” is the slogan of NSS water policy project. This is an awareness programme to preserve water resources in Kerala. The aim of this programme is to develop water culture among the student community and the public. The major activities of this project are maintenance of water resources, chlorination of wells, quality assessment of water resources, implementation of effective drainage system, establishment of information boards, preparation of short notes regarding water preservation, well water collection and quality testing, open well cleaning, construction of check dam, water literacy class, water source renovation, mangrove plantation and drainage system maintenance.
The Energy Conservation Programme aims making the student community as well as the public, aware of the importance of energy conservation. The focused areas are: alternative sources of energy, scientific C.F.L lamps and L.E.D lamps, the use of conventional energy sources and mass education. The major activities include Energy Conservation seminar, discussions, pamphlet distribution, energy survey, distribution of C.F.L lamps, debates, house visits, discussions, rallies etc.

NSS conducts legal literacy programmes in all colleges in Kerala with the active support and co-operation of Kerala State Legal Service Authority (KELSA). The thrust areas are legal literacy classes on ‘laws related to ragging’, cyber laws, use and misuse of internet and cell phones and domestic violence and laws related to marriage and family.

Alcohol abuse disorders are rapidly becoming a global health hazard among the youth. Unless efforts are taken to arrest drug abuse, it can lead to increased suicides, especially, among student community who are the promise of the nation. Education is the only means to check all these unhealthy issues in the campus and society. It must be noted that Kerala was the highest suicide rate state of India for the four years 2007-2011. Hence, National Service Scheme has undertaken massive campaign and awareness programmes seeking help from various other agencies. The objective of the campaign are: To create an awareness regarding drug abuse among the youth especially the students in the higher secondary schools and colleges in Kerala, to learn various physical
and psychological problems due to drug abuse, to offer guidance to students in finding solutions to drug abuse and teach them to say ‘no’ to the adverse peer pressure. The important activities of this campaign include awareness classes, film show, exhibition, essay competition, skit or street plays, slogan and poster competition, awareness rally/ cycle rally etc.\textsuperscript{47}

“Blood donation is life donation.” NSS is synonymous with blood donation and social service. The NSS volunteers are known as the “Ambassadors of Blood Donation”. Red Ribbon Clubs promote voluntary blood donations in Kerala. The NSS have 186 Red Ribbon Clubs. The target is to increase the number to 300. This project is sponsored by Kerala State AIDS Control Society, an autonomous society under the control of the Health Department, Government of Kerala. KSACS offers Rs 5000/- each for the Red Ribbon Club.\textsuperscript{48}

Based on report of R.K. Raghavan Committee, the NSS has launched a drive to strive for zero ragging in the campus. The high lights of this anti-ragging campaign are awareness classes, anti-ragging pledge, anti-ragging posters, helpline (online) and distribution of pamphlet. A booklet which contains the list of UGC guidelines, Supreme Court direction and statutory provision was published under the auspices of Kerala State Higher Education Council, KELSA, NUALS and NSS.

Palliative care units are formed in colleges, Higher Secondary, and Vocational Higher Secondary Schools to support the palliative treatment by the
palliative clinics and home care. This is a genuine service activity that provides a good opportunity to the volunteers to involve in humanitarian service and thus develop values of love and compassion. The services are clinical service, home care service, food service, raising funds, identifying the patients, giving awareness etc.

Lakhs of pilgrims throng to Sabarimala during the pilgrimage season and the NSS was able to contribute its stint significantly, organising an awareness programme in Sabarimala in association with Pollution Control Board. Thirty teams of NSS volunteers were deputed to Sabarimala for the helping of the pilgrims and also for creating an awareness of cleanliness among them. This Sabarimala Project aimed creating public awareness to prevent open defecation in riverbelts and promoting toilet use, offering guidance in waste segregation and cleanliness and testing the quality of drinking water at various tap ends. The volunteers also conducted anti-plastic campaign by collecting plastic bags from the pilgrims and distributing cloth bags to them.

Care and share programme is a novel and noble venture that testified the spirit of fraternity among NSS volunteers. They spread the message that NSS cares for them, and is willing to share everything with them. NSS units find out students in need of food and provided them. NSS generate monthly funds especially from the teaching staff and other well-wishers to implement this project.
Miss A meal programme is another project that reflects the magnanimity of the NSS cause, where once in every month NSS volunteers skip their noon meal and donate it to the poor people in the nearby hospitals and poor houses. It helps them to realize the value of sacrifice.

Traffic awareness campaign is a project aimed at creating traffic awareness among the student community. Students are given traffic lessons in using roads and observing traffic rules. Leaflets containing traffic rules are printed and distributed among the students. This project also aimed creating awareness among the drivers that they are the saviors of the passengers. As this attitude, projected the ‘driver’ as the hero, it was acceptable to them and it paved the way for creating a good impact on them. This congenial atmosphere helped the project a great deal, as the drivers imbibed the message wholeheartedly. Traffic department supported the campaign by providing resource persons. “Kannu nirayathirikkaan vazhi kannu thurakkoo”, which means to open the eyes of the way to avoid tears.

Considering the contemporary global and national scenario vandalised by fanatic terrorism, political terrorism and social terrorism, NSS launched anti-terrorism campaign in the higher education institutions. Activities in this regard included anti-terrorism pledge, patriotic song competitions, street plays, desasuraksha (national security) rallies, human chain creations, and awareness campaigns, distribution of pamphlets and propagation anti-terrorism among
youth by sending 3 lakhs SMS messages and public meetings for creating patriotic feeling.

The activities pertaining to uplift tribes include construction of eco-friendly houses\textsuperscript{50}, distribution of medicines, cloth, food packets, utensils etc. Medical and literacy camps were also arranged to promote their welfare. A documentary film has been produced by Zamorius Guruvayoorappan College, Calicut in the cited service.\textsuperscript{51}

The NSS has immensely contributed the creation of community assets. A feature about the NSS houses appeared in the Malayala Manorama Daily, dated 2\textsuperscript{nd} February 2007 in Kottayam edition. The following are the details of the durable assets created by the NSS during 2005-12 for the national development at local level.

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th><strong>Durable Assets Created 2005-12</strong></th>
<th><strong>No.</strong></th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Home for the homeless</td>
<td>297</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Eco-friendly houses at Nilaykal and Kombukuthi</td>
<td>32</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of libraries in adopted villages, hospitals, anganvadi, jail etc</td>
<td>76</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of sanitary latrines</td>
<td>200</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Construction of bus shelters</td>
<td>40</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Donation of wheel chairs</td>
<td>240</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
The cited contributions can be considered as a sample for the diversity of commendable contributions made by the NSS as part of its national service at the grass root level.

NSS has cultural wings in all institutions with a view to spread the message of patriotism, national integration, social harmony, anti-drug campaign and traffic awareness. NSS orchestra and sinkarimeelam team, street-play group etc are part of the cultural wing.

In order to address the adolescent problems, NSS has conducted a year-long Adolescent Health Education Programme (AHEP) in collaboration with Kerala State AIDS Control Society (KSACS). The thrust areas of the project are life skill development, adolescent growth and development and adolescent counselling AIDS awareness programme.

NSS units conducted 135 Allopathic Medical camps, 185 Homeopathy and 125 Ayurveda Medical Camps. The camps focused lifestyle diseases like diabetes, blood pressure etc. Detection camps were organised in this regard.52

NSS volunteers conducted socio-economic and health survey in rural arrears to understand the health problems ranging from occasional epidemics to diabetes and cardiac problems.

The NSS volunteers conducted a survey to find out the facilities in colleges and universities in Kerala. The areas covered under this project were the number of courses, the number of applicants for the courses, the number of
student actually enrolled, the number of teaching and non-teaching staff, the qualifications of the teaching staff, details regarding the management, the number of books in the library, the number of various clubs in the institution, co-curricular activities in the college etc.. The project was undertaken for Higher Education Council in Kerala and the details are available in their websites.

Updating the website of Panchayats is yet another odious task that the NSS has been able to accomplish successfully in Kerala. NSS has taken initiation to update the websites of 999 Panchayats in Kerala. This is a novel project that is sponsored by ‘Information Kerala Mission’.

Campaign for Total Electrification is a major initiation for popularising new and renewable energy source among the public. It is a novel campaign for total electrification and also for abating climate change. The campaign shall cover the entire state and aim at and registration of un-electrified households and buildings throughout the state, survey of un-electrified households and state wide campaign for dissemination of new and renewable energy conservation.

Women empowerment is a much discussed subject and sensitization at the grass root level is the aim of this project. It envisaged to have gender just society where men and women live in harmony with self-respect, providing space for mutual growth and wellbeing.

National Service Scheme former volunteers is another venture in Kerala.
It intends to provide a common platform that will facilitate an interactive learning and exposure that will make the former volunteers continue and evolve their social conscious responsibilities and commitment for the betterment of society. Moreover, they can also divert their endeavours to uplift the often neglected and marginalised sector of society.

It has to be noted that it comprises members who head esteemed position at national and international levels. Noted officials of civil services, MLA’s, teachers, professors, doctors, cine artists have been former volunteers of NSS and are still keen in continuing their share and involvement in the activities of NSS.

National Service Scheme Former Programme Officers is another major initiative of NSS which constitute former programme officers whose guidance is an important factor to the functioning of NSS. Though the tenure of the programme officer is four years, they can still utilize their resourcefulness by acting as co-ordinators of various community-oriented programme from the public sphere. They can also function as resource person for the various seminars conducted for the volunteers and the orientation/ refresher courses conducted for the programme officers. They can assume an advisory/ monitoring role in the smooth conduct of the NSS activities.

State NSS cell published the “CITIZENS CHARTER” to create an awareness among the public regarding the genesis of NSS, aims and objectives, administrative structure (National state, University/Directorate and unit level),
modus operandi, services rendered by NSS, opportunities offered by NSS and incentive offered to volunteers. It has been prepared in the mother tongue since it is meant for the use of general public.

Academic Calendar of NSS is a unique project to strengthen the NSS activities in Kerala. It gives guidelines to the functionaries of NSS and volunteers. It makes the NSS activities more systematic and disciplined. It describes the aims and objectives of NSS, Flagship Programme, Special Programmes, creation of durable assets, State Level Camps, National level camps etc. It also provides information regarding the activities to be conducted by NSS in each month.

Another feather in the cap of NSS is the launching of the website of NSS www.nsskerala.org. It will surely provide adequate information regarding NSS and strengthen the activities of NSS in Kerala. NSS poster is another initiative. The poster is self-explanatory. It elucidates the genesis, aims, objectives, administrative structure, activities, flagship programmes, special programmes, state level camps, national level camps and incentive to volunteers. It is meant for exhibition in school and college notice board. It is sponsored by Kerala State Pollution Control Board.

**Major Achievements**

The NSS of Kerala, by-and-large could achieve most of the national objectives in a befitting manner conducting different meaningful activities for
the enrichment of the personality of volunteers. The method used for the purpose was involving the NSS volunteers in socially productive works as envisioned by Mahatma Gandhi. Both the beneficiaries, volunteers as well as the community appreciate the NSS of Kerala as a right mechanism for national development. Despite its success, Kerala could only enroll ten percent of students of higher education in NSS.

**Nalpathimala**

Nalpathimala is a small village, which consists of wards vii, viii and xi of Athirampuzha Grama panchayat in Kottayam district in Kerala. It is an ordinary village except for the fact that the headquarters of Mahatma Gandhi University happens to be situated nearby a harijan colony and two re-settlement colonies from part of the village. The socio-economic status of the village is below average as revealed in a survey. The NSS entered directly into the problems of the local community and addressed their felt needs.

In 1990, a year after the Kottayam Literacy Campaign\(^53\), the NSS programme co-ordinator, of MG University wrote a note to the Vice Chancellor proposing the idea. The Vice Chancellor responded positively and issued necessary orders. Consequently, two and a half acres of land in the southeast corner of the university campus was promptly measured and allotted for the GramaVikas Kendera (GVK). This piece of land lies very close to the village known as Nalpathimala.
The GVK soon became the venue for a series of inter-collegiate work camps. The local people co-operated whole-heartedly. A temporary shed thatched with palm leaves was made for holding meetings. The Khadi and Village Industries Board helped NSS organise training in bee keeping for the local villages there. The NSS volunteers along with the local youth levelled some portion of the land in order to make a playground. Later small low-cost structures were put up here partly utilizing laterites and doorframes from the old houses, which were being removed from the newly acquired campus. In all the camps held here, the emphasis was on interaction with the people, and the involvement of people in the making process.

Major National Integration Camp and the Home Stay Idea

In January 1991, the major National Integration Camp sanctioned by the Ministry of Human Resources Development, Govt. of India was organised. About 500 volunteers from ten states participated.

The camp, which concluded on 19th January 1991 was a great event. It shook up the whole village. The Dances of India, particularly those presented by teams from the Punjab, Manipur, Maharashtra and Gujarat attracted large crowds, not only from Nalpathimala, but also from nearby villages which was facilitated by the male volunteers staying with the people in their own homes, motivated them beyond the expectations of all concerned.
The camp organizers, however, had a special agenda too. It was to use this camp as an occasion to create a suitable environment in the village for initiating thoughts and actions aimed at the integrated development of people here. During the cultural programme in the evenings, sometime was set apart for sharing of such thoughts with the people. The medium of communication in the camp was naturally English, but when it came to sharing of thoughts for the village the medium was Malayalam.

One evening there was a special guest. That was a seasoned community development worker who was successfully implementing a model village-adoption programme about 70 kms away under the auspices of an organisation by name Sare Family Plan (SAFP). In his impressive speech he spoke about what is happening in his village, and said that if the people of Nalpathimala were willing, they can even aim at greater achievements. He also invited interested persons to visit his village and the office of SAFP, known as ‘Aiswarryagram’ (contented village).

When the camp was over many volunteers wept, and so did the mothers, from the host families, who came to see them off. Obviously, it was a camp that had succeeded in building bonds of love. Even today, several of the families treat as a treasure the letters received by them from their guest volunteers. Even after twenty years, some volunteers continue to write to their friends in the village. The camp experience is an indication of the success of emotional national integration of the NSS volunteers.
At the end of the camp there was usual evaluation in which the campers, programme officers and the local organisers participated. It was felt that the most successful aspect where the interaction of the volunteers with the community, dances of India and the folk songs of India. The manual work and the lectures did not have the same impact as the other three. The emotional and the aesthetic had priority over the physical and the intellectual. The main reason for the extra ordinary success of the camp was pointed out to be the home stay programme, which was an opportunity to feel the novelty of other cultures, making the purpose of national integration, an achievable reality. It was a turning point as an exposure programme for the NSS volunteers, hailing from different states and divergent cultural background.

**Pain and Palliative care training to NSS volunteers in University of Calicut and VSHC**

The report on status of Chaliar River namely, *Chaliyar Rekhakal* by NSS unit of Sullamussalam Science College, Areekode, Malappuram focussed on the bio-diversity of the river, problems of water pollution and environmental degradation warned against the socio-economic loss of the people.

**Tsunami relief activities in Kollam, and Allapuzha Districts**

The NSS units of south Kerala, in the wake of the devastating Tsunami of 2003-04 actively engaged in the relief activities in the Tsunami relief camps in Kollam and Alappuzha districts.
Films produced by NSS

A documentary film on NSS “Nirmaya Karmana Shree” is the first film on NSS produced in Kerala in 1998. This one-hour film was based on the activities of the NSS unit of Zamorin’s Guruvayoorappan College, Kozhikode, jointly scripted by Prof. Sobhindran, the NSS state awardee and Sri. Abraham Benhur. Highlights of the film is a micro-study of a unit of NSS operating in a college, with a macro-analysis of the philosophy, theory, policy and programme of NSS, on the national level. It presents a discussion on the voluntary social work. It also emphasizes the role of the college youth in nation building activities as well as organizing rural youth power for the reconstruction of the villages. It puts forward the role of students in the protection of nature and environment. It takes the viewer to a tribal village of the Waynad district, Noolpuzha, to show the building of a check dam by 135 NSS volunteers with the support of tribal people, as part of the NSS special camps. The reservoir of the check dam is still a large lake providing drinking water to wild animals and irrigation to tiny plots of paddy-cultivated land owned by tribal people.

Another film directed and produced by E. Fazil56, NSS Programme Coordinator of the Vocational Higher Secondary Education in Kerala in 2010. This film focused of a variety of awareness programmes, intendin the development of the personality of NSS volunteers. An interview has been conducted in the film with Ms. Sreevidya IAS, a former NSS volunteer secretary, the eleventh rank holder in the civil service examination in 2010,
who endorsed the importance of NSS as a right scheme for college students for the all-round development of their personality.

**Survey on Alcoholism among College Students**

A study undertaken by the NSS unit of KE College, Mannanam, Kottayam, in 1993-94 under the supervision of Antony Thomas, NSS Programme Officer, who drew his inspiration of alcoholic prohibition from Mahatma Gandhi’s remark, “If I was appointed dictator for one hour for all India, the first thing I would do would be to close without compensation all liquor shops”. The survey made the following findings:

1. Action research introduced to NSS
2. Addiction to liquor was cause of a failure in society
3. Alcohol became part of celebrations
4. Labourers take liquor for a momentary relief
5. Alcohol, one of the widely used substance known to man since the dawn of civilization
6. Alcoholic individuals burden social institutions
7. Alcoholics among patients high
8. Definition of alcoholism “Condition in which alcohol intake in the sense that he is constantly unable to refrain from drinking or to shop drinking before getting intoxicated”
9. Loss of control
10. ILO study (1992) consumption increased 20%
11. The children of alcoholic may be inconsistent and unpredictable (as their fathers so)
12. Unemployment and high cost of alcoholic liquor may create financial difficulties.
13. Alcoholic employees tend to turn high rate of absentees and the quality of their work is poor.
14. Alcoholism leads to accidents
15. Offences of alcoholics a tremendous burden on law enforcement and judicial agencies.
16. Prohibition are important state policy figures in the Directive Principles
17. Article 47 of Indian Constitution directed that the states shall endeavour to bring about prohibition of consumption, except for medicinal purpose, is intoxicating drinks and of drugs which are injurious to health
18. Government is reluctant for prohibition on the argument of loss of revenue

As alcohol arrest development of individuals and societies, an awareness creation by survey and the people.

**Success Stories**

The NSS of Kerala has produced a few replicable projects as parts of its direct linkage with some Governmental departments and voluntary organisations. The target was the development of the area and the people near
the college by facilitating a creative exposure to NSS volunteers and ultimately to contribute for the nation building process.

**Kottayam Literacy Campaign**

On 25th June 1989, the Minister of State for education, Government of India, declared Kottayam as the first fully literate town in India. The Kottayam Declaration became the first in a series of literacy events in the country. In February 1990, Ernakulam was declared to be the first fully literate district in India. The following year Kerala state was declared the first fully literate state in the country. Now over 400 districts all over the country have been declared literate.

**NSS Organized Campaign**

During the second half of 1980’s the NSS slogan was Youth for Mass Literacy. This made universities all over the country to focus attention on literacy as a thrust area. The Programme Co-ordinator of NSS in Mahatma Gandhi University prepared the project for Kottayam Literacy Campaign. It was implemented with the co-operation of the NSS units, particularly of Kottayam colleges.

As per 1981 census, the literacy level of Kerala state was 69.17 percent. Kottayam District had 81 percent literacy and the district headquarters (Kottayam Municipal town) had the highest literacy level in the country, namely, 86 percent. It is discovered that until 1981 the Indian census did not
exclude children below 5 years from being counted as illiterates. When children of this age group were exempted we found that the literacy level of Kottayam town was already 95 per cent.

This was a thrilling discovery. The NSS volunteers of the four colleges in Kottayam town conducted a literacy survey to find out the exact details. The survey of the 12000 households (January 1988) revealed that in the age group 6 to 60 there were only 2209 illiterates. If these persons could be made literate, the small town of Kottayam would become 100 percent literate.

The Strategy

Before NSS plunged itself into the campaign, it took stock of what had happened in the country so far in the area of eradication of illiteracy. The Rural Functional Literacy Programme (RFLP), National Adult Education Programme (NAEP) and Mass Programme for Functional Literacy (MFPL) were all milestones in our country’s efforts in this line. None of these made the desired impact, and finally came the National Literacy Mission (NLM) in 1988. So, one aspect of the strategy was to strengthen the spirit of voluntarism and to seek the support of NLM.

It was understood that the earlier attempts did not try to make literacy a people’s movement. As a remedy NSS wanted to ensure the highest degree of participation at all levels. At the same time NSS knew its weakness. NSS volunteers are students who cannot be expected to be available on regular basis
for a long time to work on any project. But they are young, enthusiastic and capable of total commitment, if a vision and a challenge are convincingly placed before them. It was also understood that where the highest degree of participation is needed the campaign approach succeeds best.

With this homework done, an advisory committee was formed at the university level exclusively for the Kottayam Literacy Campaign. The Vice Chancellor headed this committee. The other members included chairman of the municipality, secretary of the state Resources centre, principals and senior programme officers of the four town colleges. The Vice Chancellor, leaving aside all formalities and protocols, visited the Municipal Chairman in his office to seek collaboration. The chairman was inspired by the idea and came over to the university several times. The Director spoke to Municipal Council to convince them of what they could achieve through a joint action.

People’s Education and Literacy

Gradually the idea of Kottayam Literacy Campaign took shape as a special project of the NSS of Mahatma Gandhi University to be implemented in collaboration with Kottayam municipality. It was called People’s Education and Literacy Campaign, Kottayam. The people’s education was intended to benefit the entire population of Kottayam while the literacy component was for the illiterates only.

An emblem was designed for the campaign, it was a combination of the
NLM symbol and the NSS symbol. The NLM symbol was placed at the centre of the NSS wheel. The spokes of NSS wheel (symbolizing NSS volunteers) take the mission to the periphery suggesting the dissemination of literacy and knowledge from the campus to the community. “100%” is written inside the wheel of literacy flag has been designed on navy blue cloth with the emblem drawn in white colour on it.

The core team in the leadership of the campaign consisted of senior programme officers of the four colleges in Kottayam town with the Programme Co-ordinator as General Convener and the University Public Relations Officer as the Publicity Convener.

The NSS requested the Ministry of Human Resource Development for a financial support of Rs.167000/- towards expenses on training programmes, publicity materials, survey and resurvey monitoring and evaluation, certification, newspaper for neo-literates etc. The amount was sanctioned and without this the campaign could not have been implemented. 32 National Service Volunteers (NSVs) were assigned to the university to work in the 32 municipal wards. The municipality gave NSS a room in the municipal office, right in the heart of the town.

The Objectives

Originally, the campaign was intended to be implemented over a period of two years. The first year was to be devoted for literacy exclusively, and the
second year was to be devoted for follow-up work and people’s education programmes. The year 1989 was for bringing everybody in to the fold of literacy and 1990 was for the follow up work as well as for the people’s education campaign.

Two objectives were identified for the campaign

1. To make the 2209 illiterates of Kottayam literate as per NLM standard.
2. To initiate a series of sixteen educational campaigns in such a way as to enhance the quality of life in Kottayam.

The District Collector’s help solicited: At this stage the university approached the District Collector to convene a meeting of the heads of educational institutions, editors of newspapers and heads of voluntary organisations to support the campaign. The Collector liked the idea and called the meeting as per our request. The response was tremendous. To quote the Collector’s own words, “It was probably the best attended conference which the Collector’s conference hall had ever seen, with people having to stand on the corridor for want of space inside. Even the representatives of leading trade unions of the town had come to attend this meeting.

The Idea of 100 Days comes In: It was the Vice Chancellor who initiated the discussion in the above meeting. The idea was accepted by all, though there were some reservations expressed by a few persons. The proprietor of DC Books, leading publisher, made some significant
contributions. He said, “If the number of illiterates is only 2209 and if the support is as big as is evident here, we should aims at completing the campaign in 100 days”. Thus it was decided the all the illiterates should be initiated into the world of letters in 100 days and that the minimum skills of reading, writing and comprehension should be imparted to them during this intensive phase of the campaign. The hundred days was to start on the 4th March 1989 and to end on 12th June 1989, but the campaign was to be continued for a whole year.

**The Campaign Bridge**

For the implementation of the campaign in the 32 Wards of the Municipality, Advisory Committees were formed in each ward. The chairperson of the ward level committee was the councillor of the ward. A number of squad were also formed consisting of volunteers drawn from different categories and age groups.

The NSS volunteers were selected from the units in the four local colleges. The idea of utilizing services of the students who had just appeared for the SSLC examination was a success and the most intensive phase of the campaign coincided with their summer holidays. The effort was to draw every possible human resource into this campaign. The members of the campaign bridge were the promoters of the campaign in the concerned ward one of their tasks were to identify instructors to teach in the campaign. Over 700 persons volunteered to do actual teaching. The literacy project was creating a success
story of national development through local development using the potential of the student volunteers of the NSS.

The support given by local newspapers in this process was remarkable. In most of the Kerala homes it is with a cup of black coffee and the morning’s newspaper that the day starts. Even the head load worker will have the folded newspaper tucked under his arm when he goes to work. In such a cultural setup, the newspapers had a major role to play in making literacy the emotion of Kottayam town.

Mass Awareness Programme: Awareness generation was one of the most important areas of the campaign. A wide variety of strategies and methodologies were adopted for this purpose. The first and formal strategy was personal contact for which there was no substitute. The NSS volunteers and members of the other squads went from house to house a number of times.

The Media

The media played a very decisive role in the campaign. In fact the newspapers (Kottayam based ones as well as those from outside) were competing for giving news coverage. Most of them brought but full-page supplements on the Kottayam campaign and wrote editorials in connection with successful conclusion of the campaign. The AIR and Doordarshan also gave good coverage.
From the point of view of awareness creation through media the most effective attempt was the one made through the literacy count down; which started on the 90th day. One day it was about the involvement of girl volunteers and female instructors. On another day, it was about the distribution of spectacles for the elderly learns who could not afford to buy them.

**People’s Education Campaign:**

As mentioned earlier the Kottayam campaign was a two in one programme, namely for literacy and for people’s education. The people’s education component was to be implemented through a series of eight campaigns in the manner in which such campaigns were implemented in Singapore. The campaigns initiated in Kottayam through NSS were the following. Read more books campaign, Green the city campaign, Consumer Education Campaign against Smoking, Campaign against Alcoholism, Battle against Cancer in Kottayam (Back) and legal literacy campaign. One comment often heard in Kottayam town during the campaign was this: “now only we know that there is such a thing called NSS existing in colleges” (NSS annual report MG University 1990). The campaign took NSS to the people, and people into NSS.

**Home for the Homeless**

This is an exclusive and construction project of the NSS of Kerala that involved the construction of houses for the destitute and the needy of the
society. The NSS have already constructed 297 houses for the poor and the marginalised. It is an ongoing project. In 2010 the NSS focused on constructing houses for tribals in Wayanad district. Moreover, the directorates of Higher Secondary and Vocational Higher Secondary have a project to construct 25 houses for the poor NSS volunteers. Mahatma Gandhi University has completed 100 NSS Bhavans (houses). This success story has been published in the Malayala Manorama daily as a feature on February 2nd 2007. Apart from this, the NSS cell of the university has undertaken the construction of 40 Ruby Jubilee houses, which were completed in 2009.

Asset Survey

As referred earlier, the institutionalisation process of decentralisation has begun, on the basis of devolution powers to Local Self-Government Institutions, the Government started identifying critical gaps to be filled to ensure long term sustainance of the process. One of the yawning gaps, which posed a challenge, was the absence of a proper database on the assets transferred to local governments as well as created by them$^{61}$.

In Kerala almost all the assets like Anganwadies, schools, hospitals, veterinary institutions, single village water supply schemes and roads other than highways and major district roads which are of direct importance to people, especially the ordinary people, are newly created, owned and maintained by local governments. For proper planning of new investments and scientific
upkeep of existing assets it is absolutely necessary to have reliable asset register.

It was realized that the assets survey of local governments would be a stupendous task which need a long time and consume substantial resources. So the idea of utilizing the National Service Scheme (NSS) was mooted. However, it was widely felt that the task would be beyond the capacity of this group. But the enthusiasm shown by the NSS co-ordinators both of the state level and the level of individual engineering colleges and Polytechnic Colleges emboldened the government to entrust the huge responsibility to the students placing trust to their idealism and social commitment. Thus began the massive exercise of registering the assets of local governments.

The results were astonishing proving that a combination of *Yuva Sakthi,* (youth force) and the *Raj Sakthi,* (political power) of local governments could be a powerful constructive force for national development. So it decided to document the experience so that lessons could be learned for replication as well for conceptualizing new ventures of similar nature. When the case study was sent to the Ministry of Panchayati Raj, it received their warm appreciation Government of India, New Delhi) and Government of India decided to send the case-study to all the Chief Secretaries so that this could motivate similar ventures in other states.

The launch of Student Police Cadet (SPC) is another singular effort shouldered by the NSS in Kerala. It is an extension of the Community Policing
Program, initiated by the Vocational Higher Secondary Education NSS cell in 2005. This is an action program aimed at fostering obedience to law as part of life and inculcating social obligation and duty mindedness among the youth. It trained the students to work on equal merits with the police to perform such tasks as home security actions, maintenance of law and order, traffic control and abolition of crime and offence.

**Awards and Honours**

The NSS of Kerala brought laurels for its commendable services targeting the personality development programmes of the student volunteers by extending frontiers of higher education to the communities near the respective educational institutions. The NSS has been making its mark in the campus and the community facilitating the students for the value addition in different activities during vacation and free times. Here are some of the national recognition fetched by NSS for the credit of extension dimension of education in the state of Kerala.

The following are some of the major awards won by the scheme.

1. The first Indira Gandhi National Award was presented to the Mahatma Gandhi University, Kottayam which undertook scores of innovative extension activities under the banner of NSS. The NSS was instrumental in identifying illiterate and rendering yeoman Service in making Kottayam Municipality with hundred percent literacy in India.
Prof. C. Thomas Abraham was the NSS programme coordinator in this project, who was instrumental in making the project a grand success.

2. The University of Kerala could win the same Indira Gandhi National Award for significant achievement of National Service Scheme in 2004. The major achievements considered for the national recognition of the university was hundreds of houses built and offered to the homeless and marginalised people. It was a creative and tangible innovation undertaken by the NSS with the financial support of the academic community of the affiliated colleges. Prof. Nazirudheen Kunju and Prof. Thomas Mathew were the NSS Programme Coordinators during the project period.

3. Prof. K. K. George, programme officer of NSS won the first National award, in 1996.

4. Ms. Swapna Antony, St. Joseph College, Irinjalakuda and Mr. Ram Mahesh, Loyola College, Thiruvananthapuram, (NSS Programme Officers)

5. NSS volunteers

a) Ms. Anjana, Loyola Collage, Thiruvananthapuram, 1999
b) Mr. Abhilash Thomas, Christian College, Chenganoor, 2001
c) Mr. Liju, SN College Chempazhanthy, Thiruvananthapuram, 2002
d) Ms. Anu Mol, Basalius College, Kottayam, 2006
e) Mr. Rafi Rehmathulla Hassan, Basalius College, Kottayam, 2007
f) Mr. Sandeep, NSS College, Cherthala, Alappuzha, 2010
g) Ms. Arunima S. Kumar, Shree Buddha College of Engineering, Pattoor P.O., Nooranand, Alappuzha Distt, 2011


7. Certificates of Appreciation to the NSS Programme Coordinator Mr. Abdul Jabbar Ahmed, Directorate of Technical Education, Kerala

Documentations and Publications on NSS in Kerala

One of the weak links of the NSS of Kerala is its documentation. The NSS of Kerala has made valuable contributions for the personality development of student volunteers by undertaking meaningful community development programmes targeting national development, but most of the contributions are not properly recorded and documented. The M.G. University (Assumption College, Changanaseri) published a students learning journal on the theme of open NSS.

As referred earlier, the NSS has produced two documentary films on the theme of community service and personality development.

In spite of many limitations and problems, the NSS of Kerala has immensely contributed to the development of the state. It has been able to explore innovative and constructive projects under the banner of NSS which can be called as a ‘Kerala model’ in NSS in the country. In fact, the Kerala experience of the NSS demands a paradigm shift in the focus of its activities.
the cited samples of services rendered by the NSS for the volunteers and the community, reveals that most of the national objectives of the NSS have been attained in the programmes on health, sanitation, environment, contagious diseases and women empowerment. It has created valuable assets such as check-dams, cleaning of wastes from thousands of ponds and canals, hundreds of kilometres of rural roads, thousands of trees planted and nurtured by NSS in the length and breadth of Kerala. The NSS as an instrument of social change conducted scores of awareness development programmes. In Kerala the initiatives of NSS in areas like construction of NSS Bhavans (home for the homeless), asset survey of Panchayati Raj institutions, campaign for making Kerala a total literacy state, production of two documentary films on NSS contributions are a few glaring examples. The NSS was successful in pooling the knowledge, man and material of other Government Departments in collaborative programmes in a win-win mode.

The significant events of national importance which the NSS could organise were five national integration camps, one mega homestay camp at Nalpathimala, one national youth festival and a lot of seminars and symposia intending to sensitise the student youth of the state on the burning national questions like national integration, communal harmony and the projects which needed manual work upholding the dignity of labour which Mahatma Gandhi used to remind Indians throughout his life. To a large extent Kerala was creating a new model development approach using the energy, knowledge, idealism and enthusiasm of the youth student volunteers of NSS for the
personality development of its volunteers in the campus and by conducting different kinds of socially useful productive works in the community. The major activities, achievements and success stories cited in this chapter shows that NSS is really a voluntary agency supported by the government for national service, utilising the creative energy of dynamic students youth of the country for community development for building the nation. Largely, the NSS has been successfully implementing the programme in Kerala. By observing and analysing the activities of the NSS in Kerala, it is felt that there needs updating and revamping NSS to address the needs of higher education in the local level. In the ultimate analysis, it can be found that it is a fruitful learning experience for the students as well as the community, the scheme is really a national service.

COLLABORATION AND LINKAGES OF NSS WITH MAJOR DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES

- NSS and Local Self Government Institutions on Asset Survey of Panchayati Raj Institutions, and Total Literacy Campaign, Kottayam.
- NSS AND RAILWAY: NSS AND RAIL ‘SWACHATHA’ CLEANING of Trains AND Passenger Awareness Programme
- NSS and Kerala State Legal Service Authority: Legal Literacy Classes for under graduate Girls.
- NSS and Revenue Department: Disaster Management Training for NSS Programme Officers and Volunteer leaders
• NSS and Forest Department: Conservation Awareness Programms.

• NSS and Home Department: Community Policing and students Police Cadet.

• NSS and Health Department: Blood Grouping Camps & AIDS and Other health related Awareness Campaign.

• NSS and Governmental and Non-Governmental Agencies; Environment Awareness Programmes. Energy Management Centre, Kerala State Electricity Board.

• NSS and Kerala Pollution Control Board: programmes for PlasticFree Campus.

• NSS and Kerala Suchitwa mission: Sensitisation Programme for NSS Programme Officers and Volunteer Leaders on Waste Management.

• NSS and Local Clubs for Constructive Programmes: Village Roads, Playgrounds and cleaning of ponds and canals.
References


44. *THE HINDU*, daily (Online edition) Friday, November 06/2009.

45. Minutes of Kerala State Legal Service Authority, Eranakulam,2006, P.11.
   P.22.


65. A Film Sanghom, screened by Asianet T.V Channel a comment on NSS, 27/02/ 2005.